

Alexander Aleksandrovich Starchenko

DOB: 1924 Place: Rostov

(An exchange student from the Soviet Union at Columbia U.)
500 Riverside Dr. New York, NY 10027

General characteristics: 5'8" tall, and weighs 150 lbs. with brown hair, graying at the temples. He is 40 years old. His right hand is paralyzed (from a battle of Stalingrad wound), and he keeps it constantly in his pocket. Starchenko was born at Rostov on the Don, a son of Ukrainian parents. He is married and has one child. He teaches philosophy at Moscow U., and is paid well. The family has a three-room apartment in Moscow.

He is a graduate of Moscow Univ. and a PhD candidate. He says he came to Columbia in Sept. 1960 to study philosophy of law.

Starchenko is a member of the Communist Party.

Exchanged student who has been at Columbia since 1960, attending Columbia

K. met Starchenko through Slavov. When K introduced himself to S, after

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they first met, S suggested that the two of them go outside, on the campus, to talk. He speaks Ukrainian with a mixture of Russian words. His English is good but with an accent. He told K that he travelled in Ukraine and said that he had visited Chernivtsi "near Stenyslaviv" (he did not use the new name -- Ivano-Frankivsk -- for that city).

In the course of the conversation S threw in a statement that "Kiev is the best city in Russia", and waited for K reaction. Later he explained that he did it on purpose, because he had fun with another Ukrainian-American student arguing about Kiev being a Russian or a Ukrainian city.

exchange.
He complained to K that the other students get more money for books and trips than he does, and asked K where he could buy two law textbooks cheap. [The slip on which he wrote the titles of the two books is attached.] He said he would prefer used books because he does not have money for new ones.

While in New York S said he reads the NY Times and Novoe Russkoe Slovo.

the city in his opinion is quite dirty, but he did not criticize the USA in

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general. He said he has visited Pennsylvania and Vermont, is planning a trip to Boston, and ^(in there) before he leaves -- in June -- to California.

S has seen the off-Broadway play "The Blacks", and indicated he would like to go with K to a soccer game, because he enjoys that sport.

K spent some time talking with S about Ukrainian independence. He told K he knows about the Melnyk-Bandera split among Ukr. nationalists. He said that banderivtsi want an independent Ukraine, "but where was the independent Ukraine when the Germans were attacking?" S readily admitted that Ukraine is not independent or sovereign at present, but he indicated that it would not be able to stand on its own, if it were independent.

What would happen to the collective farms and the whole economy of Ukraine if Ukraine were independent? he asked, and added that the nationalists do not have an answer to that.

K asked him about the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA). S answered that there was UIA, "but we have destroyed 50 per cent of it."

Asked what happened with the other 50 %, S did not answer, just smiled.

K then asked S how he can learn more about Ukraine.

S: "Read the Soviet press."

K: "Where can I buy it?"

S: "At the Four Continents bookstore. Read both sides [nationalist and Soviet] that make up your own mind."

Earlier S asked K about the pre-World War II Ukrainian immigrants and whether they have any feeling towards Ukraine, and about the new immigrants and their press. He wanted to know whether the young people are cultivating their culture, and said it would be a good idea if the young people here lived together in harmony.

Asked about the Ukrainians in Ukraine, S replied that there are both Russian and Ukrainian schools in Ukraine, but that the majority of students

attend Ukrainian schools, and cultivate Ukrainian culture.

Other topics discussed:

On Stalin -- It was not possible to express criticism under Stalin, he did not have the right attitude towards the people, there were arrests and hard labor camps, "but now things are better."

Young poets -- Ukrainian youth is enthusiastic about Drach, Vinharenovsky and Korotych. Khrushchev criticized Yevtushenko for "Babin Yar" because Jews were not the only ones who were massacred in Kiev. There were others, as well. This is where Yevtushenko made an error -- in writing only about the Jews.

Hungarian Revolution -- I first quoted Marx and Lenin on revolution. In Hungary he said, people were not too happy after Stalin's death, so they revolted. The students led the way. Some of the leaders asked the United States for help, while the others asked the Soviet Union. The ones who received the aid won the revolution.

Religion -- In America students don't all believe in God, but attend church just so that they will not be called atheists. In Ukraine, most of the people are officially atheists, but some still have faith.

Taras Shevchenko -- Danderytski are writing that we change Shevchenko's works. That's not true. The works of Shevchenko are the same both here and in Ukraine.

Starchenko asked K whether his ^{parents} would like to return permanently or for a visit to Ukraine. He asked also whether the parents know that K is meeting a Soviet student. When K answered that they do, and do not object, I then ^{asked} whether they want him to hang a red trident in his room.

MIATULI STARCHENKO

Apr. 23, 1964 meeting with K

A few days earlier K gave S a copy each of Sucasnist, Novi Dni and Svoboda.

They met as usual in a university library, went to supper at a restaurant, then walked a few blocks to the subway, where they parted.

Starchenko mentioned that he liked what he read in Novi Dni, in particular the editorial stand on the letter from the 34 Ukrainian cultural leaders.

"That's nice that they would like to see them /the Ukr. delegation/ here," he told K.

S also read the answer of the 62 Ukrainian-Americans to this letter. He seemed to want to make fun of it, and compared it to the Cossaks' famous letter to the Sultan. He did not take the clipping with the answer of the 62 with him, but took a copy of Svoboda.

S asked K about the Ukrainian youth organizations here. He told K he would like to have a list of them so that he can show it to his Ukrainian friends in Moscow, because they will be asking him how the Ukrainians here get along.

In further conversation S named some of the Ukrainian newspapers that are published here and in Canada and commented on their great number. "Even the farmers have their own newspaper," he said, and mentioned the Canadian Farmer. /C.F. was mentioned in the Novi Dni magazine which he had read/.

S asked where the Ukrainians take so much money to publish so many newspapers? And when K told him that they have supporters who contribute, S said that "banderivtsi" get the money from the Americans."

He also asked K for some youth magazines and again asked for a list of Ukrainian youth organizations.

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K then asked S what he thinks about Yu. Kochubov's speech at Rutgers U. To this S said, "Why be afraid of him. He won't turn you into communists."

"Those who write against him are probably afraid to talk to him." He added, "Maybe they'll even say that Kochubov is an 'enkavedist' or that I am an 'enkar'. Look, I don't have a gun — but here is my card," he joked.

Recently S was in New Haven and in Boston to attend seminars and to talk to professors. He also said that he was in Yale last fall for a few ~~more~~ weeks.

S has a daughter, also a nephew (his brother's son) for whom he said he would like to buy a (toy?) gun, but they are too expensive, he said.

Someone from Fordham U. called him recently and asked him if he would like to speak there. S said he would be willing, and they agreed to make arrangements about this later. The person who called was apparently a Ukrainian student, but S did not remember his name.

Students at the Int. House are afraid to talk to him and are avoiding him. This makes him angry. "Why should they be afraid of me?"

He is paid here \$200 a month, and says that is sufficient, but he was critical about his English tutor — "some stupid student. In Moscow we give the US students our best professors for tutors." He said he intends to complain about this when he gets back.

He came to the USA after waiting for two years since applying.

S said he has a bottle of vodka in his room, and asked K to come up next Wednesday to have a few drinks. He also asked K if he could get some Ukrainian records so he could give them to some other students at the Int. House. Before they parted S said he would like to go to a Ukrainian concert here.